



FAA Intercom

Dispatches from the Front

Forest Keener, a controller at the Northern California Terminal Radar Approach Control facility deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of the U.S. military's Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is one of more than 200 FAA employees to be activated.

Keener is a KC10 pilot for an air refueling squadron based out of Travis Air Force Base near Sacramento, Calif. His mission is to provide fuel to fighters and bombers while en route to complete their missions. The FAA Intercom asked Keener for some personal insight into the war.

March 19

Keener filed the following just a few hours before U.S. bombing in Iraq began. It's quite a change to go from the life of luxury (ATC) to tents and cold showers. I think most people think we belong to a good old boys' flying club and stay in 5-star hotels. Not a very accurate assumption! It's part of serving our country and we're proud to do it. Until you've made a sacrifice for freedom, I don't think you can fully appreciate what a great thing freedom is.

April 11

Keener was asked what it was like flying a KC10, which refuels other aircraft while in flight. Piloting the KC10 is like flying a Cessna 152 continued on page 5

Putting Together the Pieces of the Shuttle Tragedy



The Space Shuttle Columbia takes off from Kennedy Space Center at the beginning of its doomed voyage.

When Dan Diggins saw the first raw data from radar, he knew right away. "This is bad," he told himself. "It means it's coming apart."

Diggins, a FAA air safety investigator, was viewing the debris field left by the Columbia shuttle as it reentered Earth's atmosphere on Feb. 1. So began the first of many long days for Diggins and a core group of agency employees who have been providing important assistance to the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB).

One of Diggins' first actions was to contact Doug Gould, an investigations specialist in Air Traffic, for radar data from all FAA facilities tracking the shuttle's reentry.

That was not an easy request to fulfill since the FAA had been tracking Columbia for more than 1,000 miles from the West Coast to its final impact point near Lake Charles, La., as debris fell along the entire route. Gould also requested secure radar data from military installations and put out a call for other imagery, such as that from satellites and ships.

If gathering the radar information was daunting, analyzing it to determine where the tens of thousands of pieces had landed seemed impossible.

That unenviable task fell to Mark Olsen, a resource management specialist in Air Traffic, and members of the National continued on page 12

In This Issue:

Read about the Aeronautical Center's white thumb, new plans for HQ's library, SARS precautions for FAPers, travel charge card warnings, and two soldiers' insight from Iraq.



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Page 16. Who's trashing Styrofoam?



News in Brief

FAA Fights Airborne Illness

Media attention to the American Airlines jet from Tokyo that was quarantined in San Jose, Calif., for several hours has spotlighted an issue in which the FAA has direct involvement (see related story on p. 9).



The FAA is working with airlines and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to increase public awareness about ways to prevent contracting severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), the flu-like illness originating in China that has infected thousands of people around the world.

While the health and welfare of flight crews, airline workers and the traveling public is a priority of the FAA, it is the CDC that establishes procedures to quarantine a flight. If the flight crew of a commercial aircraft operating in the United States suspects SARS, the captain is required by law to report the illness to the nearest U.S. quarantine station, which will arrange a medical response at the destination airport.

FAA operations inspectors have been directed to notify airlines about CDC information on SARS (found at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/), including guidelines for isolation and infection control, airline crewmembers, air medical transport, airline cleaners, and the cleaning of aircraft.

The FAA's federal air surgeon is working with the Air Transport Association, its member airlines and public health authorities to implement the CDC's recommendations.

Hispanic Heritage Month to Feature FAA Theme

The FAA's theme for this year's Hispanic Heritage Month was selected as the best out of 72 entries at a recent meeting of the National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers.

The winning theme, "Hispanic Americans: Honoring Our Past, Surpassing Our Present, and Leading Our Future," was submitted by J. Carlos Manduley, National Hispanic Employment Program manager in the Office of Civil Rights.

The FAA's entry will be used in the design for the 2003 National Hispanic Heritage Month poster, which is made available to all federal, state, and local governmental agencies, as well as to private sector and community organizations nationwide. Each year the White House issues a proclamation for the month's observance, utilizing the theme as its centerpiece.

The council was established to assist the federal government in promoting and attaining equitable representation of Hispanic Americans in its workforce. National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated Sept. 15 - Oct. 15.

TRACON Completes Consolidation

Consolidation of the Potomac Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facility in Warrenton, Va., was completed when controllers from Baltimore-Washington International Airport began working there April 5.

Five TRACONs have been combined in this new facility. The BWI employees joined controllers from Washington Dulles International, Reagan Washington National, Andrews Air Force Base, and Richmond International airports, who moved to Potomac beginning last December.

With the consolidation now complete, about 300 FAA employees at Potomac are handling an average of 5,000 flights a day in 23,000 square miles of airspace covering parts of five states - Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

FAA controllers continue to staff the towers at the five airports.



The operations room at the Potomac TRACON.



Final Boarding for the Concorde

Travelers who have always wanted a taste of supersonic flight have until Oct. 31. On that day, British Airways will discontinue service on the Concorde jet, ending 27 years of supersonic service to the United States. Air France plans to discontinue service at the end of May.



The Air France Concorde will be landing for the last time as a passenger jet on May 31.

Falling passenger revenues, combined with rising maintenance costs, forced the decision, the airlines said. The global downturn in the aviation industry proved to be the final straw for the aircraft.

"This is the end of a fantastic era in world aviation," said Rod Eddington, British Airways' chief executive. The airline is planning to make its Concorde available to museums for public viewings.

Oceanic Services Contract Goes to Small Business

The FAA has awarded a \$57 million contract to a small business for oceanic integrated services support. Joseph Sheairs Associates (JSA) of Shamong, N.J. will support the FAA in national airspace engineering, system development and prototyping under the 7-year contract.

The contract is a sign of the FAA's commitment to provide business opportunities in national airspace modernization to small business, said Charles Keegan, associate administrator for Research and Acquisitions.

Modernization and automation of oceanic airspace air traffic control is required to keep pace with growth and other international civil aviation authorities' capabilities and services. The FAA is responsible for the safe and efficient transport of aircraft and passengers in about 24 million square miles of airspace over the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

JSA will provide a wide range of engineering services supporting key programs that improve air traffic over the oceans, including the Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures program.

Communicating Clearly and Strongly

Administrator Marion Blakey has signed an order that calls for FAA employees to improve communication through the use of clearer, plainer writing.

"Over the years, some of our writing has become dense and needlessly complex," Blakey said in the order. "Clarity of communication is a safety issue, and we must strive to communicate clearly and strongly."

The order applies to all employees who write or review FAA documents



intended for internal or external distribution. It is aimed mainly at new documents, although improved writing

standards should be applied to existing documents that require significant revising. The order contains tips on effective writing techniques and formatting documents for readability.

More information is available in the FAA's plain language manual, located at www.faa.gov/language.

Tech Transfer Emphasized

The FAA's Technology Transfer Program has found a new home in the Office of Knowledge Management at the William J. Hughes Technical Center.

The program, established by congressional legislation, makes federally funded research and products available to the public and private sector for further use.

The Office of Knowledge Management establishes policies for intellectual property



and technology transfer, and promotes knowledge sharing. Technology transfer fits well in this office and will receive greater emphasis as an important strategic element for the Tech Center.

Through various agreements, the Tech Center can accept funding from non-federal sources to conduct research consistent with its technology transfer goals, as well as promote technological innovation and opportunities among small, minority and disadvantaged businesses.

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Dispatches from Iraq: on the Ground

Kenyetta Spencer, an operations specialist for the administrator's hotline at Headquarters, relayed the following information from her brother, Mervin, who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mervin, a 22-year-old specialist in the 3rd Infantry Division, deployed to the Middle East on March 1, leaving his belongings and car with his sister. Kenyetta wrestled with the thought that it was she who encouraged Mervin to join the military so that he could further his education. She drove him to the recruiter's office the day after his high school graduation to enlist. They'd faced tough times together; now they would have to do it separately.

Before he left for the war, Mervin said he was sorry that he wouldn't be able to walk Kenyetta down the aisle at her wedding in June. She had the wedding programs printed up with this inscription: "In honor of my brother, Specialist Mervin L. Spencer, serving in the Armed Forces in Iraq."

Mervin called home for the first time on April 7 and spoke with his mother, who dictated everything he said to Kenyetta.

Following are her notes.

Mervin is situated not far from Baghdad. He is doing well and is in good spirits. He said that most of the guys in his unit are in their late teens to early twenties. Morale hasn't always been the best, because everyone misses their families, but they have all knitted together to encourage and hold up one another. Mervin says that they all call one another "battle buddy." He says that regardless of what background a battle buddy may come from, they have become a family. They cry together. They pray together. They look out for one another.

He said that the poverty in some parts of Iraq is unbelievable. The children are starving in the streets and his unit often shares food with them. He sounded happy about bringing hope to the Iraqi people. He was also excited about meeting Ted Koppel.

Mervin said that at times we know more about what's going on in the war than some of the troops do, because they don't have access to CNN, newspapers, etc. He said they live pretty rugged lives out there in the desert.



Kenyetta and Mervin Spencer enjoy safer times before his deployment to the Middle East.

When his unit first arrived in Kuwait they had on gas masks and full chemical suits. The temperature was about 90 degrees. He said that many troops experienced heat exhaustion at first, but now most are used to the heat. He carries all his possessions in his backpack (it weighs about 50 lbs) so he can pick up and move at any time.

One thing he said that he can't wait to do when he returns home is to take a bath. When asked when was the last time he and his battle buddies were able to shower, he said, "It's been a while – maybe sometime

in early March." He mentioned the MRE (Meals, Ready to Eat) meals that used to taste like rubber now are welcomed delicacies.

During the days, Mervin drives a Humvee in a supply convoy. The convoy carries supplies to other units in the 3rd Infantry Division. He said that the supply lines are heavily protected, but he chooses to carry his weapon in one hand and drives with the other, just in case.

When asked about sleep, Mervin said, "What's that?" Most nights he has morgue duty. He said that he doesn't like that so much – it's real depressing to keep watch over the remains of fellow soldiers.

His "battle buddy" for morgue duty is a young, petite female soldier. One night the sand storm was so fierce it picked her up off the ground. He found a piece of rope for her to hold onto and tied it to a post so that she wouldn't get blown away. He said that the blinding wind and sand is something that you can't describe – something like a tornado. Every time you take a breath you inhale sand.

Mervin said that when his unit was convoying towards Baghdad he had a lot of anxiety about what to expect. But he sounds confident that it will be over soon. He said that it would be a while before he comes home, because U.S. troops will stay to rebuild the city.



Dispatches from Iraq: in the Air

continued from page 1

(if you've ever done that). It flies a lot faster and a lot higher, but responds to control inputs a little slower. It's a very proceduralized process. We have checklists for just about everything we do. So, as long as you can read and follow checklists you will rarely get yourself in trouble.

Refueling other airplanes in mid-air is generally transparent to us. We have a boom operator that controls the refueling

Piloting the KC10 [while receiving fuel] is tricky. You basically fly the airplane into a safe position behind the tanker and wait for the boom operator on the other airplane to "plug" you. As long as you keep the airplane steady in the envelope, the fuel transfer rate is fairly quick. There's no autopilot involved, so it's all hand-eye coordination. Take away daylight, add a little turbulence and clouds, and you can have your hands full pretty quick. Add to that the fact that you need the fuel to accomplish the rest of your mission and it can become quite stressful.

Keener was asked if he and his comrades had seen much coverage of the war. We see almost nothing but coverage of the war. BBC and CNN are the channels of preference out here. It's easy to get burned out, though. So we try to watch anything else to maintain sanity.

There were reports of some downed aircraft at the beginning of the conflict. Is that something you think about, or do you just try to shut out of your mind?

The thought of getting shot down definitely crosses our mind. Even recently, our aircraft have been shot at. Luckily, the enemy is a bad shot. It is one of those things that you try not to focus on. You stay focused on the mission. If you happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, you do what common sense dictates — get the heck out of there and spread the word! It sounds simple, but that's what we do.

How much flying have you been doing?

We've been flying about every other day. Our missions vary in length, but we've accumulated close to 100 hours, so far.

Physically and mentally, we are all doing fantastic. We would rather be at home with our families, but we know that will happen soon enough. For now, we realize

that we are doing the right thing not only for our country, but also for the people of Iraq.

April 13

Are you still flying a lot, or have things quieted down?

We're still flying quite a bit. There's still a lot of support needed for the ground troops. We're a big part of that. No slowdown in sight.

Have you gained a new perspective on life?

I've been in similar situations before. But it's easy to forget how good we have it in the U.S. I told myself before that I wouldn't take all the great things for granted.



Forest Keener, a TRACON controller, flew a KC10 tanker during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

boom and keeps a lookout on the receiver aircraft in case they get a little too close.

One unique aspect of our job is that we also [can be refueled while in flight]. This allows us to be topped off by another tanker aircraft and significantly extends our mission time. We hold more gas than any other tanker, so it's usually beneficial to keep us on station with a full tank.



An F-15C Eagle from the 33rd Fighter Wing receives fuel from a KC10 tanker, the type of aircraft flown by Forest Keener.

DoD photo by M. Sgt. Mark Bucher, USAF



Budget Crunch is Main Course at PWC Luncheon

The ongoing budget crisis is placing increased pressure on the FAA to become a more performance-based organization, Administrator Marion Blakey told attendees at this year's Professional Women Controllers conference in Washington, D.C.

Reiterating her recent testimony before Congress, Blakey said she is convinced that Americans are getting "a good value for their investment in the FAA." Nonetheless, she added, accountability could be improved since about only a third of agency employees receive pay increases based on performance.

The administrator stressed the need to renew the Superior Contribution Increase provision for controllers, which expires in September. She also urged completion of a new staffing agreement and promised to return to the bargaining table soon for other union negotiations.

"If you hold me accountable, and if I hold you accountable, we can begin to strengthen the trust of Congress and fulfill the vision of the president," Blakey said. "That is why we need a system based on performance."

Blakey's luncheon address capped a morning session in which the entire Air Traffic Management Team appeared on the stage. Led by Bill Peacock, now-retired director of Air Traffic, the team explained in detail the budgetary burdens their organization faces this fiscal year and in the future.

Peacock told attendees that the shortfalls of Fiscal Year 2003 will be compounded in 2004 and beyond, "continuing that trend of not having enough resources," he added.



Patty Swenor, PWC president, addresses members during the organization's conference. On stage with her are members of the Air Traffic Management Team.

For instance, the Southwest Region has several administrative positions unfilled this fiscal year. More than a third of the controllers at the Albuquerque Center are in the developmental stage, which tends to increase the need for overtime.

Like many of the regions, Great Lakes has to staff temporary towers at big events, such as the Oshkosh air show and NASCAR races. This requires extra funds for travel and paying overtime to substitute controllers who work permanent towers when their coworkers are at the shows. The impact on Great Lakes' budget could require earlier closing times at smaller towers to save money.

Solving airspace chokepoint problems, such as those over the Springfield, Mass., area — which has seen a 22 percent increase in sector capacity and is saving airlines half a million dollars a year — requires extra controllers and additional salary.

It appears that the FAA has only one option: carving out more capacity with the resources it already has. That means constantly honing cooperation between

management and controllers, and between the FAA and airlines.

The call for increased cooperation comes at a time when morale is being challenged by a number of factors.

***FAA Intercom* Editorial Schedule Released**

The *FAA Intercom* welcomes articles or story ideas. Employees who would like to contribute may call Editor Jim Tise at (202) 267-3443, or e-mail him via Lotus Notes or at jim.tise@faa.gov.

Following are the tentative deadlines for this year's issues. Contact the editor for further information.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
July	June 19
August	July 24
September	Aug. 21
October	Sept. 25
November	Oct. 23
December	Nov. 20



IG Gives Mixed Review of Op Errors, Runway Incursions

The FAA has made progress on reducing the number of controller operational errors and runway incursions, but needs to do more, according to a report by the Department of Transportation's Inspector General.

While acknowledging the FAA's progress last fiscal year (operational errors decreased 11 percent and runway incursions dropped 17 percent compared to Fiscal Year 2001), the report found "the number of these incidents is still too high considering the potential catastrophic results of a midair collision or a runway accident."

The FAA agreed, noting that it has developed a number of initiatives to address both issues.

Under evaluation are low-cost technologies most likely to reduce runway incursions, including ground marker technologies and electronic message boards. Determining whether the systems are cost beneficial and that there is a measurable cause-and-effect relationship between the individual technologies and the reduction of runway incursions is the next step.

The FAA also has conducted reviews of 16 airports recommended by the Inspector General to determine if surface marking and signs needed improvement. Six of the airports were identified as needing improvement; four of those airports have completed upgrades and the other two are in the process.

Other options, such as implementing in-cockpit surface moving map displays, are still being discussed by the FAA and the aviation industry.

Regarding operational errors, the FAA is exploring human factors issues to better understand the role of casual factors in errors and develop training that will enhance controllers' cognitive skills.

The National Air Traffic Professionalism course, for instance, is designed to exercise the mind to improve concentration. Racecar drivers and professional athletes use similar programs to improve their focus and ability to make split-second decisions.

The number of these incidents is still too high considering the potential catastrophic results of a midair collision or a runway accident.

DOT Inspector General's Report

IG Expects More

The Inspector General has made additional recommendations to reduce operational errors.

It has taken issue with the FAA's method for categorizing the severity of operational errors, especially for the most dangerous types. The FAA responded that its categorization system is scientifically based and allows FAA Headquarters – not the facility in which the operational error occurred – to accurately classify the error.

The Inspector General also wants the FAA to evaluate the impact its expanded Controller-in-Charge (CIC) program has had on operational errors on a facility-by-facility basis. The program offsets the reduction in the number of air traffic supervisors by using CICs to provide oversight of air traffic operations during supervisor absences.

A breakdown into separate categories for operational errors according to commercial, general aviation and military aircraft was called for, as well.

Another recommendation is increasing oversight of regions and facilities that do not show progress in reducing operational errors.

New Routing for Foreign Travel Documents

Employees traveling abroad must submit their non-routine travel packages, visa or passport applications, or travel plan entries to Novella Bonds, the foreign travel analyst for the Office of International Aviation. Bonds also is responsible for the annual foreign travel plan, and assistance on foreign travel.

All other foreign travel approval procedures and clearances remain the same. The interim requirement to enter all foreign travel in the Quick FAA International Travel Tracker at <http://webapps.awp.faa.gov/traveler> (Username: QFITUSER; Password: NIMBLE) remains in effect until further notice.

Headquarters employees may drop off their passport and visa application documents to Bonds in Room 903. Those in the field still have the option to FedEx their packages to the DOT Passport Agent or to: Novella (Marvette) Bonds/API-10, FAA, Room 903, 800 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20591.

For more information, on non-routine travel call (202) 26-7095, on passport/visa information, call (202) 267-7118, fax (202) 267-5025, or access the Foreign Travel Guidelines Web site at <http://home.intl.faa.gov> for updated information.



Enabling the Disabled

The FAA's Civil Rights Office will begin briefing managers and supervisors across the country this month about requirements in the DOT Reasonable Accommodation Order, which is designed to help employees with disabilities do their jobs.

Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta has made integration of persons with disabilities into the workforce one of his top priorities. To that end, the DOT created the Disability Resource Center in 1999 as a no-cost resource to ensure that employees and job applicants can participate fully in all aspects of the department's work, programs, and services.

The center has assisted many employees. It helped arrange the purchase of an extra large computer monitor and text enlarging software to assist an employee whose eyesight was worsening. The FAA provided a special wheelchair that allowed an employee with quadriplegia to navigate down narrow airplane aisles to conduct aircraft safety inspections.

Center employees identify technologies and services that meet individuals' needs. They provide training on a number of topics, including disability culture/etiquette and use of technology. Guidance also is available about Section 508, which requires the agency to make its technology accessible to persons with disabilities.

Requests for reasonable accommodation are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and involve the employee and the decision maker.

The Disability Resource Center is located in the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh St., SW, Room 2110 in Washington, D.C. The phone number is (202) 493-0625; TTY: (202) 366-5273; fax: (202) 366-3571; e-mail: drc@ost.dot.gov; and Web site: www.drc.dot.gov.

For more information, contact Stephanie Ortoleva at (202) 366-9067, or e-mail Stephanie.Ortoleva@faa.gov.

New FAA Library to Show a FLAIR for Customer Service

The FAA Headquarters' library — heretofore of use primarily to on-site employees — is being transformed into a research-oriented facility of use to all FAA employees using the Internet, e-mail and instant messaging.

As the new name implies, the FAA Library for Aviation Information Research (FLAIR) located in Room 931 will be dedicated to fulfilling employees' requests for research about aviation and aviation law. The new library should be operating by this summer.

Gone will be the reading room, computer banks and access to magazine and newspaper stacks. The overall collection will be reduced by 40 percent, but the resources needed to support aviation research will be retained.

FLAIR will provide documents and information in electronic form whenever possible. "We're going virtual," said Ann Sullivan, manager of the library.

Employees entering the new library will submit research requests at a customer service window. A cube will be provided for employees to briefly review the research to make sure it's adequate. All FAA employees will be able to request research via e-mail or instant messaging once all access points have been established. In the meantime, call (202) 267-3117 to request information. A Web site also is being developed.

Library staff will be available to train FAA employees on how to perform research from their own desktop computers.

The decision to transform the library was driven by Congress, which mandated in this year's FAA budget legislation that the agency sever all ties with TASC, the quasi-government organization that used to run the library.

Rich Boe, FAA program director for ARA's Information Technology Division, said the agency originally intended to do away with the library. At more than \$2.1 million annually, it was too expensive to keep running. Costs had increased some years at double-digit rates.

But a survey of the lines of business quickly indicated there was a need for a library with more focused service.

The new library is budgeted to cost about \$1.4 million annually. The lines of business will share the cost of fulfilling their employees' research requests.

Members of the library staff — none of whom will lose their job — are now FAA employees.



The Headquarters library is being transformed into a research-based facility.



Celebrating Asian Pacific Heritage Month

The FAA will be celebrating National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May.

May was chosen as the month to honor the contributions, heritage, and traditions of Asian and Pacific Islanders in part to pay tribute to the first Japanese immigrants who came to the United States in May 1843.

In 2000, the five largest contributors to the nation's Asian Pacific American population were China, India, Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

The highest numbers of Asian Pacific Americans live in California, New York, Hawaii, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Washington, Florida, Virginia and Massachusetts.

Combined, these 10 states are home to 75 percent of the nation's Asian Pacific American population. Close to half of Asian Pacific Americans live in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

SARS Precautions Suggested for FAA Travelers

FAA supervisors should consult with their regional flight surgeon and Human Resources office to determine the best course of action when employees return from travel in areas affected by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

That suggestion comes from Dr. Jon Jordan, the FAA's federal air surgeon, whose office is working with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The CDC – the lead federal agency in addressing the SARS issue – advises that people planning elective or nonessential travel to Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Hanoi, Vietnam, reconsider their trips until further notice.

Travelers returning from affected areas are encouraged to monitor their health for 10 days and follow the recommendations on the CDC Health Alert Notice (access the CDC's SARS Web site at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/, and click on "Travelers'

Health"). The notice contains details for both the traveler and the traveler's physician.

The CDC is not recommending routine restriction of movement at this time. For instance, travelers returning from SARS-affected areas who do not have a fever or respiratory symptoms are not restricted from activities outside the home and should not be excluded from school or work.

Travelers that develop fever and respiratory symptoms within 10 days of return from SARS-affected regions should be evaluated by their physician and local public health department and limit interactions outside the home.

FAA employees who fall into this category should notify their FAA supervisor prior to returning to work. The final decision regarding duty or leave status will be based upon the facts of the individual case.

Savings Bonds Campaign Runs this Month

The U.S. Savings Bonds Campaign has begun and will run through the end of May.

Series I bonds are sold at face value and offer a rate of return over and above inflation for the life of the bond. Series EE bonds are sold at half their face value and earn rates based on 5-year Treasury bills.

There are several advantages to investing in U.S. Savings Bonds:

- ◆ They earn competitive rates of return compared to other forms of saving, and interest accrues monthly and compounds semiannually. Interest earned on the bonds is exempt from state and local income taxes. Federal income tax on interest is deferred until the bonds reach maturity or are redeemed. It might be exempt if the bonds are used to pay for higher education expenses.
- ◆ The bonds are backed by the U.S. government and can be replaced if lost,

damaged or stolen.

- ◆ They are an affordable way of saving. The minimum investment is \$25. Individuals can



purchase as much as \$15,000 worth of EE bonds and \$30,000 worth of I bonds each year.

- ◆ Individuals can buy bonds through their payroll savings plan or use automatic debits from checking or savings accounts. They also may be bought on-line using a credit card. The bonds are easy to cash at most

local financial institutions. Special cards are available for either Series I or EE bonds that require mailing to the payroll office. However,

Employee Express is often the preferred method among employees.

In the near future, paperless bonds will be made available and investors might be able to purchase and redeem them electronically as well. There also will be an option to convert paper bonds to electronic bonds.

For more information, Headquarters employees may contact Bruce Petro at x78905. Employees in the regions and centers may contact Janice Armstrong at (202) 267-7287, or Charlene Bowlding at (202) 267-3872. Also, access the Web site at www.savingsbonds.gov.



Your Benefits . . . and You!

The Office of Personnel Management has awarded the administration of the Fed-Flex program accounts to SHPS, Inc.

Fed-Flex is a new, voluntary benefits program that allows employees to set aside a portion of their salaries on a pre-tax basis to pay dependent care and medical-related costs through flexible spending accounts (FSAs).

SHPS will be responsible for teaching employees about how Fed-Flex works, providing customer service, integrating the program with agency payroll systems, and enrolling employees.

A Fed-Flex open season will begin May 19 and end June 20. FAA employees will have access to the benefit in September when the payroll system can accept the funds. Future enrollment periods will coincide with health benefits open seasons,

with effective dates of Jan. 1 – Dec. 31.

There are two types of FSAs. The dependent care account, with a \$5,000 annual limit per family, reimburses day-care

insurance (including health plan deductibles, coinsurance and co-payments). Employees may contribute the full amount to each FSA during the early open season.

Elections to

Fed-Flex must be made each year. The election is irrevocable unless there is a life event (similar to FEHB premium conversion rules).

Employees should

analyze how much they expect to spend on medical treatment and dependent care because any amounts that go unused are forfeited at the end of the year.

For more information, access www.fsafeds.com or call (877) 372-3337 to enroll.

Fed-Flex is Coming

expenses for dependent children age 13 and under, and for parents and siblings incapable of caring for themselves and claimed as dependents on income tax returns.

The medical/dental account, with a \$3,000 annual limit, will reimburse dental, vision and other items not covered by health

Don't Run Afoul of Travel Card Rules

The Offices of Human Resource Management and Financial Services remind employees that use of the government travel card (Citibank MasterCard) is for official government use only.

Employees may not use the travel card for personal purchases, allow monthly bills to become delinquent, or authorize someone else to use the card. Employees are responsible for reading the agreement that was included in the package when the card was received.

Failure to pay the total monthly bill might result in the loss of an employee's charging privileges. If the card is canceled due to non-payment, the delinquency may be reported to credit bureaus or referred to collection agencies. Additionally, misuse of the card will result in formal discipline.

Therefore, it is important that employees expeditiously submit travel claims and apply the reimbursement toward full payment of the monthly bill.



Travel Card Do's

- ◆ Use your government travel card to pay for official travel expenses.
- ◆ Track your expenses while on travel so you have accurate information for filing your travel claim.
- ◆ File your travel claim within five days after you complete your trip, or every 30 days if you are on continuous travel.
- ◆ Submit payment in full for each monthly bill.
- ◆ Follow your bank's dispute process for charges that are incorrect.
- ◆ Contact your bank's customer service

department if you have questions about your monthly bill.

- ◆ Be aware that misuse of the card could result in disciplinary actions.

Travel Card Don'ts

- ◆ Don't use your government travel card for personal use.
- ◆ Don't obtain travel advances through the ATM that exceed your expected expenditures for a trip.
- ◆ Don't obtain travel advances through the ATM unless you are on travel or will be on travel shortly.
- ◆ Don't allow your monthly bill to become overdue.
- ◆ Don't wait for receipt of your monthly bill to file your travel claim.
- ◆ Don't forget that the card is issued in your name and liability for payment is your responsibility.
- ◆ Don't make late payments because this could result in suspension or cancellation of your card.



People

New Chief Counsel Named

Andrew B. Steinberg has been named chief counsel for the FAA. He will serve as the top legal advisor to the administrator, overseeing the agency's legal staff in Washington and 11 field offices.

Steinberg joins the FAA after serving as vice president, general counsel and secretary of Church & Dwight, a diversified consumer packaged goods and industrial products company with \$1.5 billion in sales.

He also served as chief legal and administrative officer for Travelocity.com, and chief legal officer of Sabre, a leading provider of computerized reservation services to the travel and transportation industry.

As associate general counsel for American Airlines, he managed all employment counseling and litigation, as well as environmental legal matters.

He graduated *cum laude* from Harvard Law School and earned his bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* from Princeton University.

Air Traffic Slots Filled

Bruce Johnson, Air Traffic Division manager in the Northwest Mountain Region, has been named to replace Bill Peacock as director of Air Traffic. He had been acting deputy director under Peacock, who retired earlier this month.

Also, Linda Schuessler, manager of the Air Traffic Evaluations and Investigations Staff, has been named deputy director for Air Traffic. She replaces Jeff Griffith, who retired in November.



Bruce Johnson



Linda Schuessler

New IPT Lead Named

Dr. Wilson Felder has been selected as the new Integrated Product Team (IPT) lead for Safe Flight 21 and Surface Technology Assessment.

Felder joins the team after a 2-year position as special assistant to Bill Voss, director of the Terminal Business Service.



Wilson Felder

The IPT's mission is to foster new technology initiatives to the point where they are suitable for acquisition and deployment.

Felder will be responsible for the test and evaluation of new and advanced technology, while overseeing the current research and development programs within the organization, including Safe Flight 21 and the runway incursion reduction program.

Felder replaces Dave Ford, who has become the IPT lead for Oceanic/Offshore.

AEA Air Traffic Division Manager Selected

Rick Ducharme has been named manager of the Eastern Region's Air Traffic Division. He replaces Frank Hatfield, who now directs the Air Traffic Resource Management Program at Headquarters.

In his new position, Ducharme will oversee 52 facilities – including those at major airports such as LaGuardia, JFK International and Washington Dulles International – and more than 3,200 employees.

Ducharme had been assistant manager of the Air Traffic Division and was

on detail as deputy director of the Air Traffic Systems Requirements Service. He joined the agency in March 1982 as a controller at the Boston Tower.

Flight Management Advisor Selected

Eric Bries has been named the new chief scientific & technical advisor for Flight Management in the Office of Regulation and Certification. He will help introduce new technological advances in aviation safety into the National Airspace System.

Bries had been assistant manager in the Aircraft Certification Service Rotorcraft Directorate in Ft. Worth, Texas. He's also served as a flight test pilot, chair of the Aircraft Certification Flight Program Oversight Committee, and the representative to the Flight Program Policy Committee.

GAMA Hires Ex-FAAer

Brian Riley, former FAA assistant administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, has been named vice president of government affairs for the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA).

Riley left the FAA late in 2002 for the Department of Transportation, where he was deputy assistant secretary for budget and programs.

New NTSB Chairman, Deputy Selected

Ellen G. Engleman has been named the 10th chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Engleman was administrator of the Department of Transportation's Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) from September 2001 until last month. RSPA is responsible for issues related to the safe and secure movement of hazardous materials via all modes of transportation.

Also, Mark V. Rosenker was designated vice chairman. He had been deputy assistant to President Bush and director of the White House military office.



Picking up the Pieces of a Dream Come Apart

continued from page 1

Transportation Safety Board.

Olsen's first thought when he heard about the shuttle accident was whether the FAA could help NASA in finding the many pieces of the Shuttle and "whether our software tools could analyze the massive amount of data we'd have available."

Using software called Raptor – developed by Olsen and co-worker Steve Beaulieu – in conjunction with software from the U.S. military, the FAA analyzed radar data collected from 17 of its facilities to track the descent of hundreds of pieces of the shuttle. The analysis will not only help investigators calculate where the pieces landed and retrieve them, but may help in determining the causes of the accident. "The first piece that came off tells you more than the last piece," Diggins said.

Differentiating a bit of debris from hundreds of nearby pieces as it falls from tens of thousands of feet might be akin to threading needles stacked in a mile-high haystack. "It's quite tedious," said Olsen.

"Trying to eliminate [radar blips] that don't appear to be associated with the shuttle . . . is more of an art than a science," he said. So far, he and the other members of the team have tracked hundreds of pieces.

Don Day, the Southwest Region's regional emergency transportation representative, is spearheading a massive support effort to help NASA scour a debris field 150 miles long and 10 miles wide. His group has contracted for more than 550 vehicles – from 4-wheel drive to pickup trucks to 18-passenger crew buses – from locations as far north as Kansas and as far west as Colorado.

Under his watch, mobile air traffic control towers were set up to protect helicopters and other aerial search craft flying in congested, low-altitude environments.

The need for safety immediately became evident. Danny Fuimaono, a controller from the Beaumont (Texas) Tower



Members of the FAA team assisting NASA join Sally Ride, CAIB member, in the board's headquarters in Houston. They include (from left) Paul Wilde, Steve Wallace and Dan Diggins.

received an award from the U.S. Forest Service for helping one of its pilots avoid an accident at Angelina County Airport. "That kind of paid for all the effort of getting the mobile tower down there," Day said with the understatement of a man whose job it is to deal with emergencies.

Day also has been responsible for coordinating the transport of more than 80,000 pounds of debris to the collection center at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.

While Diggins interviews members of the shuttle team to establish a chronology of events and garner clues, and Olsen and Day help searchers locate debris, Paul Wilde's mission is to "follow the foam." Wilde, an aerospace engineer from the Office of Commercial Space Transportation, is leading the effort to investigate the potential damage caused by foam insulation that came off the shuttle's external tank during the launch and hit the leading edge of the orbiter's wing.

Using his expertise in launch vehicle safety, including post-accident analysis, Wilde is developing a test that could demonstrate the extent of damage caused by foam hitting actual shuttle flight hardware.

Ronald Gress, who retired last year as manager of the AST's Licensing and

Safety Division, has been asked to play a lead role in the operations group of the investigation.

Steve Wallace, director of the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation, might have the toughest job of all the FAA employees working on the investigation. As one of 13 official members of the CAIB, Wallace and his fellow board members will make the final determination about what caused the Columbia break-up and what recommendations to make to NASA in the board's final report.

Those recommendations may determine if and when the space shuttle program returns to flight. Wallace is heading the recommendation process for the board, with the benefit of valuable experience from his job at the FAA. "We're normally on the receiving end of [NTSB recommendations,]" Wallace said.

He said the CAIB recommendations will be guided by two principles: a focus on safety, not on redesigning the shuttle; and using all of the talent available to the board to guide the recommendations.

The work is performed in the historical context of the U.S. space mission. "I remember every significant milestone of the space program," Wallace said. "And they're



Meigs Field Gets X'd Out

all in evidence here."

The challenge of discerning answers from wreckage spanning a thousand miles or more is a motivational factor. When Diggins speaks about "the biggest debris field that we've ever seen," he sounds not so much resigned as determined to leave no stone unturned.

Overriding all, of course, is the never-ending search for safety. "I'm more into trying to help people out," Olsen said. "If I can contribute to aviation safety, or helping people understand what the agency is trying to do, I feel I can do that."

In Memory of the New Magnificent Seven

Hundreds of employees from the Eastern Region expressed their sympathies to their compatriots at NASA during a ceremony to honor the seven astronauts lost aboard the Columbia Shuttle.

A large banner was created and signed by employees offering their thoughts to the families and co-workers at NASA. The banner contained a picture of the astronauts and a poem entitled "The New Magnificent Seven," written by Bob Macchia in the Eastern Region's Logistics Division.

The banner was sent to NASA's Johnson Space Flight Center in Houston.



Eastern Region employees signed this banner honoring the fallen NASA astronauts.

The sudden closing of Chicago's Meigs Field by Chicago Mayor Richard Daley left the FAA little time to respond to a number of important issues.

But respond FAA employees did, scrambling to help stranded pilots, send out notices to airmen (NOTAMs) and save equipment located at the field.

Citing security risks associated with terrorism, and with no warning, Daley ordered the bulldozing of Meigs' runway on the evening of March 30. The future of Meigs Field — a popular airfield among general aviation pilots — had been debated for some time. In the past, Daley has proposed closing the airfield and creating a park. The FAA has no say in the disposition of Meigs.

Still, the FAA has a responsibility to protect the public. "My first thought was for safety," recalled Phil Smithmeyer, from the Great Lakes Region's Airports Division, upon hearing the news of the closure at 5:30 a.m.

The Kankakee Flight Service Station issued a NOTAM within an hour of being notified. The FAA made sure that regulations were followed requiring yellow or lighted Xs be placed at the end of the runway to warn off pilots.

Next, the FAA had to deal with 16 small aircraft that were stranded at the airport. Employees from the FAA's Airports and Flight Standards organizations determined that the taxiway was in suitable condition for takeoffs, and was long enough at 3,000 feet to accommodate the performance of the small planes.

But to limit its liability under such unusual circumstances, the FAA ordered the pilots to fly alone and only under visual flight rules.

When the southerly route suggested by the FAA proved to be too foggy and windy, pilots asked to take off from the taxiway on a northerly route. Light poles, however, limited the taxiway's length to 2,000 feet on the north side. The FAA approved the change and all 16 planes eventually took off.



An "X" marks the six spots on Meigs runway bulldozed by the City of Chicago.

The contract control tower is now closed.

Airway Facilities employees have inventoried visual navigational aids and tower equipment at the airport and are ready to remove it when required.

Airports are required to give the agency 30 days notice before closing, except in cases of hardship or threats to public safety. The City of Chicago said the threat of terrorists using general aviation aircraft justified closing Meigs without the usual notice.

"We have heard from members of the general aviation community and we share their concern," said Administrator Marion Blakey. "Removing any centrally located airport such as Meigs from the system only diminishes capacity and puts added pressure on O'Hare and Midway airports," she added.

Air Traffic is particularly concerned about congestion during convention season, when many general aviation pilots fly into Chicago.

Several groups have filed litigation concerning the closing.



News in Brief

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Congress Moves to Prevent Further ATC Privatization

A bipartisan group of congressmen have introduced a bill that will prohibit the privatization of the air traffic control system.

The "Air Traffic Control System Integrity Act of 2003" introduced in the House of Representatives responds to an Office of Management and Budget decision to place controllers on its 2002 commercial activities list, an inventory of jobs that could be opened to competition.

The bill would prohibit the Department of Transportation from authorizing the transfer of any FAA facilities to the private sector, or the outsourcing of work performed by FAA Air Traffic employees, including air traffic controllers, systems specialists, and flight service station employees.



Rep. James L. Oberstar is one of four Congressmen introducing legislation to prohibit the privatization of the air traffic control system.

The bill comes even though Congress has shown no interest in privatizing air traffic control beyond the completed contract towers project (the bill would not impact that program). Administrator Marion Blakey also has repeatedly stated that the FAA has no plans to contract out air traffic control positions.

Still, the sensitivity surrounding this idea led two senior Democrats — Rep. James L. Oberstar (D-Minn.) and Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) — and two senior Republicans Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-N.J.) and Rep. Jack Quinn (R-N.Y.) — to act.

Business Diversity Conference Set for Memphis

The FAA is cosponsoring an airport business diversity conference June 14-17 in Memphis.



The conference — whose theme is "Managing the Present — Shaping the Future" — serves as an educational and networking forum for small disadvantaged businesses.

Workshop topics range from certification training to airport security, while other sessions examine career opportunities in aviation. Representatives of several airports in the Southern Region will discuss business opportunities, certification, security and other issues.

Access the Web site at www.amac-org.com (look for "Events" in the right hand column) for more information, or e-mail amac.one@verizon.net.

Watching out for the Kids

The FAA invites its employees to enroll their children in the FAA's Child Care Program, a nationwide effort that includes childcare facilities at 21 locations.

The FAA recognizes that family-friendly programs enhance its ability to recruit and retain employees. Employees benefit from the agency's subsidizing the centers' costs for construction, repair, maintenance and utilities, allowing childcare providers to offer tuition rates lower than many private facilities.

Another advantage is that 13 of the centers are located at air route traffic control centers and the Southern California Terminal Radar Approach Control facility, offering service during extended hours (beyond 6 p.m.) or on weekends to accommodate employees' shift schedules.

Children of FAA employees are given priority in enrollment, but those of other federal and non-federal employees may be enrolled on a space-available basis.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children must accredit FAA childcare centers. About 50 percent of the FAA centers have been accredited and the others are working toward that goal.

For more information, employees should contact their coordinator:

AAL	Rosanna Shaw	(907) 271-4986
ACE	Teresa Thomas	(816) 329-2682
ACT	Leona Wilkes	(609) 485-8897
AEA	Lucy Cimino	(718) 553-3113
AGL	Minnie Lawrence	(847) 294-7757
AMC	Kim Dermody	(405) 954-7707
ANE	Harrison Beckman	(781) 238-7285
ANM	Anne Purcell	(425) 227-2023
ASO	Gwen Simmons	(703) 339-4900
ASW	Jenny Francia	(817) 222-5817
AWP	Cindy Lopez-Hickson	(310) 725-7829
HQ	Ginny Bachman	(202) 267-7235



Recognition

New England Regional Administrator Amy L. Corbett recognized members of the regional Federal Women's Program steering committee. **Hatice Baser, Elizabeth Doucette, Barbara Travers-Wright and Diane Romanosky** were cited for their work in developing and arranging the delivery of a 1-day course on writing effective self-assessments. Aircraft Certification and Airway Facilities Division Managers **Jay Pardee and John Zalenchak** were recognized for their support and financial sponsorship.

The **Seattle Air Route Traffic Control Center** was presented with a trophy and certificate at the Combined Federal Campaign awards ceremony for collecting the "highest average gift" in King County, Wash., for agencies with 100 - 350 employees. The center contributed almost \$75,500, exceeding its goals for contributions and number of givers. The average gift of its 85 participants was \$888.



Buzz Adams, Seattle Center Air Traffic manager, and Gail Hogenson, Air Traffic chairperson for the center's CFC campaign, display the certificate the center received for its successful fundraising.

Bill Mimura from the FAA's San Francisco International Field Office received the Charles Taylor "Master Mechanic" Award for at least 50 years in aviation maintenance. At least 30 of those years were spent as an FAA-certified mechanic or repairman.



Larry Kephart, Flight Standards Division manager for the Western-Pacific Region, presents the FAA's master mechanic award to Mimura.

Nick Sabatini, associate administrator for **Regulation and Certification**, presented letters of appreciation to 28 employees for designing and implementing the organization's cost accounting system/labor distribution reporting program.

The **Southern Region Airports Division** presented the 2002 "Feather in the Cap" award to St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport, Montgomery Regional Airport, and Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport for having no safety violations for five consecutive years.

Gerald A. Lewis, Sr., Small Business Program manager at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, was selected to serve on the Oklahoma Minority Supplier Development Council's board of directors. The council promotes the development and hiring of minority-owned businesses.

A student at one of the FAA's Centers of Excellence won the Department of Transportation's student of the year award.

Lamia Salah, a member of the **FAA Airworthiness Assurance Center of Excellence** at Wichita State University, was nominated for the award by the FAA for her thesis on repair of aircraft composite structures.

The **Allegheny Flight Standards District Office (FSDO)** presented a copy of a proclamation by Pennsylvania's governor to the Allegheny County Airport Authority. The proclamation proclaims the week during which the FSDO's Wings/Aviation Maintenance Technicians Weekend is held as aviation safety education awareness week in Pennsylvania. The airport has been a major sponsor of the Wings/AMT Weekends.

Central Region Administrator Chris Blum honored **Lillian Gasway**, manager of the region's Airway Facilities Division, for her role in making the FAA one of only 20 organizations that has participated in the St. Louis Career Fair for 20 consecutive years. The event has grown from the first year when it attracted 200 eighth graders, to this year, when 8,000 attended.



Gasway accepts a certificate on behalf of the Central Region for its support of the St. Louis Career Fair. At right is Susan Katzman, director of career and technical education for St. Louis City Public Schools.



FAA Center Turns Tables on Cafeteria Styrofoam

While most people associate Earth Day with the color green, the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center is seeing white.

It's the white of Styrofoam — one of environmentalists' chief bugaboos in fighting the conservation wars. The light, resilient polystyrene often used as food containers is notorious for being non-biodegradable and clogging landfills.

The environmental staff at the center's Architecture and Engineering Division estimates that the center's cafeterias generate about 1,750 cubic yards of Styrofoam containers annually. That was just too much waste to ignore.

Unfortunately, the traditional method for recycling Styrofoam proved unsatisfactory. The process in which the material was crushed, bailed, stored and shipped was time-consuming and required buying a bailer. An amount equal to a truckload of Styrofoam would have to be stored before shipment. But food residue left during storage invited rodent and insect infestation.

Instead, the center turned to a new device that has reduced waste by an estimated 320 cubic yards per year, and the Architecture and Engineering Division plans to increase that number by installing more of these machines over the next few years.

The Styro Solve System shreds #6 polystyrene and plastic and sprays it with a liquid that softens and dissolves the polystyrene into a "polygel." The polygel is then recycled.

"Before we got the machine, it seemed like trashcans were overflowing with Styrofoam," said Jim Long, an engineer on the environmental staff. "Several people were really bothered by that, so they really appreciated us putting the machine in."

Before the installation, more than 1,000 "clam shell" containers and as many cups were bagged and hauled off to a landfill during an average week. Now, in an average month, the machine reduces the



Shelley Hinojosa disposes of a food container in the Aeronautical Center's new Styrofoam recycling machine.

amount of Styrofoam waste in 833 garbage bags down to a 45-pound bag of polygel.

Placement of another machine in the center's main cafeteria would reduce the cafeterias' solid waste generation by 90 percent, by one estimate.

In an ironic twist, Long said the center would like to encourage its food service contractors to use more recyclable Styrofoam and styrene utensils at the cafeterias. The machine cannot recycle some of the utensils currently used.

"Most people think of Styrofoam as something that harms the environment," Long said. "With the recycling machines, there's really no reason not to use Styrofoam."

"It is our hope that in the near future, people will be recycling Styrofoam as often as they do aluminum cans today," said Shelley Hinojosa, an engineering technician in the Architecture & Engineering Division.

Earth Day Site Opens

Conservation and preservation of the environment is a year-round goal of the federal government.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with other federal agencies, has established a Web site at www.earthday.gov/ that provides a comprehensive guide to Earth Day events sponsored by the federal government and other related environmental issues.

It is the first interagency effort of its kind dealing with the environment.

Visitors can search the site by state and region to find community service opportunities and Earth Day events where they live.

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